



## NEWS RELEASE

### USDA Forest Service Northern Region



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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Comments Sought on National Forest Recreation Residence Fees

Missoula, Mont.—The USDA Forest Service has issued a draft of proposed regulations, appraisal guidelines, and policy revisions to implement the provisions of the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act of 2000 (CUFFA), according to Northern Regional Forester Brad Powell.

“I want to make people aware of their opportunity to review and comment on the proposed regulations, guidelines, and policy revisions,” said Powell. “Comments are due by August 11, 2004.”

Copies of the project proposals can be found at [www.fs.fed.us/recreation/permits](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/permits) or at local Forest Service offices. Comments may be submitted electronically to the Internet site at <http://www2.srs.fs.fed.us/cuffa/cuffa.html>. Written comments should be mailed to: Forest Service, USDA, ATTN: Director of Lands, Mail Stop 1104, Washington, DC 20250-1104.

The proposed revisions, published in two successive notices in the Federal Register on May 13, would establish new specifications for conducting appraisals of National Forest lots used for privately owned recreation residence structures built under a permit system. “The Forest Service has issued special use permits for more than 15,200 recreation residences on National Forest System lands throughout the country,” said Powell, “and the Northern Region administers 872 of those permits.”

The agency is obligated by law to assess a land use fee for these special use permits that is based on the principles of fair market value. In the late 1980’s, the Forest Service adopted a policy that established that the annual land use fee would be equal to 5% of the appraised fee simple value of each lot, a set of specifications for appraising recreation residence lots, and a provision that lots would be reappraised at least once every 20 years.

In the mid-1990’s, the Forest Service started to implement that policy, when it initiated a 5 year effort to appraise all of its recreation residence lots. Because most of those lots had last been appraised in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, there were varying degrees of increases in their appraised values over the course of that 20-year period. Even though the Forest Service had been annually indexing the land use fees, in some

locations appraisals were showing that some land values had increased dramatically during the past 20 years, resulting in significant increases in their land use fee. Additionally, as the Forest Service started completing many of its appraisals, some permit holders had identified inconsistencies in the manner in which appraisals were being conducted.

In October 2000, Congress passed the CUFFA. One of its purposes was to establish a more consistent procedure for determining land use fees for recreation residence special use permits, including the manner in which recreation residence lots are to be appraised.

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